

Press release
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AI a confounding factor in the rise and fall of workplace burnout

- The adoption and exploration of AI is both contributing to (22%) and lessening (26%) burnout for Australian business leaders
- 45% of leaders believe their employees are suffering more from burnout this year than in 2024, while 41% say burnout has increased for themselves and other business leaders
- 38% of employers believe burnout levels among staff have reduced this year and 42% say burnout has also fallen for them

Sydney, 8 December 2025 – Australian workplaces are experiencing a burnout paradox, as almost as many employers believe burnout is reducing as there are employers who feel it is on the rise. Simultaneously, workplace factors like the adoption and exploration of AI are reported to both helping and hindering levels of burnout.

New independent research by specialised recruiter [Robert Half](#) finds 45% of employers believe their staff are more burnt out now than they were 12 months ago. Another 41% of employers say their business's leaders - including themselves – are also affected more by burnout this year than they were last year.

Meanwhile, another 38% of employers believe burnout has improved among their workforces in the past 12 months, and 42% of employers believe they or their business leaders do not suffer as much from burnout as they did last year.

Burnout in the workplace is when people feel emotionally, mentally, and physically exhausted from excessive demands at work¹, which not only makes people less effective in their role but can cause serious health issues. In 2024, 80% of employees reported they suffered from burnout².

“The companies that are seeing improvements in burnout levels are likely those that have genuinely embedded sustainable work practices. For those where burnout is intensifying, this data is a stark reminder that a ‘business as usual’ approach, or superficial interventions, simply won’t cut it,” says **Nicole Gorton, Director at Robert Half**.

The key contributors of burnout for workers and leaders

Heavy workloads remained the key contributor to employees feeling burnt out last year and into 2025, according to their employer.

Contributor	Employers about their employees in 2025	Employees in 2024
Heavy workloads	39%	56%
The adoption and exploration of AI	24%	
A lack of communication and support from their manager	24%	21%
The pressure to innovate and adapt rapidly, such as the digital and AI transformation	23%	N/A
Commuting to the office	23%	27%

¹ [Beyond Blue, Burnout and mental health](#)

² [Robert Half, November 2024](#)

Insufficient number of staff	23%	36%
Toxic organisational culture	19%	26%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 500 hiring managers in 2025 and 1,000 fulltime office workers in 2024.

Interestingly, business leaders say they experience some of the same stressors of burnout that their employees do, despite not ranking it highly when asked to outline what they perceive is affecting their own workforces.

For employers, the top five contributors to their own burnout are:

- Heavy workloads (35%)
- The adoption and exploration of AI (22%)
- An insufficient number of staff (20%)
- A toxic organisational culture (20%)
- Global economic and geopolitical volatility (20%)

The key factors easing burnout in workplaces

When it comes to revealing what has helped ease their own burnout levels, business leaders outlined the adoption and exploration of AI was most beneficial. It is despite AI being highlighted as a main cause of burnout among their counterparts and workforce who have felt their burnout levels rise in the past year.

Top factors for business leaders	% of business leaders	Top factors for workers	% of workers
The adoption and exploration of AI	26%	Sufficient staffing	33%
A clear strategic direction	25%	Flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid work and flexible hours	29%
Open communication	25%	Effective and empathetic leadership	26%
Flexible work arrangements, such as hybrid work and flexible hours	23%	Open communication	25%
Prioritising strategic delegation	21%	Targeted mental health and wellbeing support	23%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 500 hiring managers.

“One of the most fascinating insights is how AI can both contribute to and ease burnout,” says Gorton. “While adoption can be taxing at first, leaders who harness it for efficiency are finding it helps reduce their own workload and stress.”

How workplaces are alleviating burnout

To prevent burnout going forward, 40% of employers are providing greater flexibility around their employees’ schedules and workplace arrangements. They are also continuing to adopt practices that employees identified as effective in easing burnout throughout 2024.

Measure to alleviate burnout	Percentage of employees who say it helped in 2024	Percentage of workplaces implementing this in 2025
Provided greater schedule and workplace flexibility	n/a	40%

Staff encouraged to take time off	22%	36%
Help provided to prioritise projects	20%	36%
Delegate some responsibilities to other team members	18%	32%
Hired extra staff to alleviate workloads	16%	34%

Source: Independent survey commissioned by Robert Half among 500 hiring managers.

“Burnout is no longer flying under the radar. Businesses are finally treating it as a leadership and operational priority, not just an HR concern. The path to reducing burnout lies in strategic talent management and empathetic leadership. Companies that prioritise adequate resourcing, flexibility, and clear direction will not only ease pressure but also get a more engaged workforce and gain a competitive edge in attracting and retaining talent,” concluded **Gorton**.

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Notes to editors

About the research

The study is developed by Robert Half and was conducted online in July 2025, by an independent research company of 500 hiring managers in finance and accounting, IT and technology, and human resources. Respondents are drawn from a sample of SMEs as well as large private, publicly-listed and public sector organisations across Australia. This survey is part of the international workplace survey, a questionnaire about job trends, talent management, and trends in the workplace.

About Robert Half

Robert Half is the global, specialised talent solutions provider that helps employers find their next great hire and jobseekers uncover their next opportunity. Robert Half offers both contract and permanent placement services, and is the parent company of Protiviti, a global consulting firm. Robert Half Australia has offices in Brisbane, Melbourne, Melbourne South East, Perth, and Sydney. More information on roberthalf.com/au.

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